

I will try to be brief. We have beat this subject to death, but I find it ironic that we talk about cutting the funding of the one agency that returns more on its money than any other agency does.

If we're talking about cutting the NSF by 1 percent, we should cut everything in the budget by 1 percent. And I might even vote for that if you are willing to cut defense by 1 percent; Cut every department, cut Social Security by 1 percent, and so on down the line. Then you might have something that would be worth doing. But to attack something that actually benefits this Nation, increases our health and wealth, and is allowing us to at least try to keep up with what other nations are doing, is utterly unrealistic.

I would point out, and I can show you graphs indicating that we are falling far behind other nations. We occupied the premier spot in research for a number of years. But now South Korea, as an example, is very rapidly getting very close to what we are spending on research as a percentage of GDP. I expect them to pass us in a few years.

It is incredible to me that we are supposed to be the brightest, most powerful Nation in the world, and yet we are losing ground compared to nations such as South Korea. If we are serious about competing with other countries, we absolutely have to keep investing our money in research, whether it's the National Science Foundation or whether it is the Department of Energy or the National Institutes of Health.

In addition to that, I would mention that the National Science Foundation is just about the lowest-cost research institution. We spend a lot less money in the National Science Foundation than we do in the Department of Energy, than we do in National Institutes of Health or that we do on NASA. One of the lowest costs with the highest rate of return, I don't see any reason in the world to cut the NSF.

Mr. Chairman, I will yield to the gentleman from California.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Just a short clarification, that this amendment does not propose a cut in the funding, it proposes to very slightly reduce the rate of growth from what was proposed. That is my only clarification.

Mr. EHLERS. I thank you for the clarification.

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word, and I yield to my good friend from Washington State (Mr. BAIRD).

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I will be very brief. I want to echo what the distinguished ranking member said.

The following countries are increasing their investment in basic research faster than this legislation would authorize, and they've already put the money up front. Listen to these countries and see if you think it is wise for our Nation to reduce its investment even further, and further fall behind: China, Taiwan, European Union, South

Korea, Singapore and others. Do we seriously want to further reduce our investment in basic research if we want to keep our Nation competitive? I submit we don't, and I would urge defeat of this amendment.

I thank the gentleman.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. CAMPBELL).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. CAMPBELL of California. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California will be postponed.

□ 2100

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MR. GARRETT OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 11 offered by Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey:

At the end of section 3, add the following new subsection:

(h) REDUCTION.—Each of the amounts authorized to be appropriated or made available under this section shall be reduced by 0.5 percent.

Mr. GARRETT of New Jersey. Mr. Chairman, I, too, echo the words of my colleagues who are in support of the overall funding of the National Science Foundation, and I offer this amendment to H.R. 1867, which I hope will provide incentives for the NSF to identify waste and any abuse within the Agency, but also, very importantly, to help identify those programs which are either underperforming or simply just not working.

I believe this legislation will help be a model of fiscal responsibility. It is similar to the legislation we just heard from in two respects. H.R. 1867 authorizes the National Science Foundation to increase their spending, which goes to the point of the gentleman from Michigan was saying before, by 7 percent, and again in 2009 and 2010.

The point we must make here, though, is inflation has remained constant during this same time period at around 3 percent. So when we purport to be so concerned about the taxpayers' dollars and the debt we are leaving our children, which I just heard from the gentleman from the other side of the aisle previously, how can we justify programmatic increases for research that are actually more than twice the rate of inflation?

As I referenced before, when I go back to my constituents back at home in town hall meetings and the like, they are not seeing 7 percent increases in their wages and salaries. They are not seeing a doubling of their incomes and their family household incomes.

They may be seeing that as far as their expenses are concerned. They are seeing all other sorts of increases in spending, such as gasoline prices and the like that they have to put up with, but they are not seeing the increases in income and expenditures that we are seeing in this bill.

I will comment on one comment that the gentleman from the other side of the aisle made before as far as being consistent. I think we heard the American public on this past election day. The American public is concerned about overspending by Congress. They want us to prioritize where our dollars go. They want to make sure that we are spending every dime efficiently and appropriately.

I have yet, however, to hear one suggestion from the other side of the aisle, either here on the floor or on the Budget Committee, on which I serve with some of the gentleman on the other side of the aisle, as to where we with can make some of those cuts. Instead, what we are seeing is a continual increase in spending.

Another point to make as well: Time after time our constituents come to our office quoting the discrepancy between authorization levels and appropriation levels. It is my hope that instead of having to disappoint them once again, that we set realistic authorization levels that may actually be realistic to the appropriation levels that come down the line. Let's be realistic, both on what we can do for our constituents and also what the appropriators may be doing with this bill later on.

I encourage my colleagues to support this amendment, because it is our duty simply as stewards of our constituents' money, the taxpayers' dollars, as we step forward to make an honest assessment of what we can afford and should afford the American taxpayer.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the last word.

Mr. Chairman, we have been over the basics. Let me just reiterate, this proposal for the increase in the National Science Foundation is thoroughly consistent with President Bush's own agenda. The competitiveness initiative calls for these kinds of increases. That is point one.

Point two: If we hope to maintain our competitiveness, if you look at the proportion of our economy today that is the direct result, and Dr. EHLERS illustrated a number of examples, but the direct result of research and inventions that have come out of funding by the National Science Foundation, a tremendous amount of our economic prosperity today came from those investigations.

As Dr. EHLERS so eloquently said, we don't know, "we" generally, not just we in the Congress, but especially we in the Congress, don't necessarily know which particular investigation, which particular study, is going to yield those profound results. But some will.

I will tell you, I just spoke to a scientist in my district last week and he